

### REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-21 and 23-44 are presented for consideration, with Claims 1, 21 and 41 being independent.

The independent claims have been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art.

Claims 1, 3-5, 8-13, 16, 21, 23-25, 28-33, 36 and 41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Ludwig '294. Additionally, Claims 6, 7, 18-20, 26, 27 and 38-40 are rejected as allegedly being obvious over Ludwig '294 in view of Brunson '823, and Claims 14, 15, 17, 34, 35 and 37 are rejected as allegedly being obvious over Ludwig and further in view of Palmer '683. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants' invention as set forth in Claim 1 relates to a distributed group system provided with terminal devices installed for a plurality of users, and a server device connected to the terminal devices via a communication channel, for displaying information on a screen of a terminal device of each of the users. The server includes receiving means for receiving a picked-up image repeatedly and information on whether a user is presently working or on leave from each of the terminal devices, and transmitting means for transmitting the picked-up image repeatedly and the information to each of the terminal devices. Each of the terminal devices includes receiving means for receiving the picked-up image repeatedly and the information on whether a user is presently working or on leave from each of the terminal devices, and display means for displaying 1) a virtual office area where a group of a user's virtual single rooms of a department are displayed and 2) a class organization icon allowing the display means to display an organization chart including a plurality of departments. In addition, Claim 1 includes changing means for changing display of a first group of the user's virtual single rooms of

a first department into display of a second group of the user's virtual single rooms of a second department in response to selecting the second department indicated in the organization chart.

Claims 21 and 41 are directed to a method of managing terminal devices provided for a plurality of users in a distributed group system, and terminal devices, respectively. Similarly to claim 1, these claims are capable of displaying a virtual office area and a class organization icon.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, a distributed group system is provided with, among other features, display means to display a virtual office area and a class organization icon. The class organization icon allows the display means to display an organization chart including a plurality of departments. This feature of Applicants' invention is discussed, for example, in Figure 11, and the accompanying specification beginning on page 30, line 15.

As discussed in the previous Amendment of December 21, 2004, the Ludwig patent relates to a multimedia collaboration system that displays an information aggregate of another user's workstation. A computer-based system uses geographically dispersed multimedia LANs that are connected by a WAN. Ludwig is read to use a collaboration initiator to indicate members registered in an organization, and session participants are selected from a graphical rolodex. New participants can be invited by clicking an ADD button.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, however, Ludwig is not understood to teach or suggest, *inter alia*, a class organization icon that displays an organization chart including a plurality of departments. The Office Action asserts, on page 5, that Ludwig includes a class organization button in the form of the video phone window and collaboration initiator window. From Figures 2B, 22, and 8C and the accompanying disclosure, it is

understood that the window displays only one group of icons and does not have the capability of changing the group displayed. It is respectfully submitted, therefore, that Ludwig does not display a class organization icon allowing the display means to display an organization chart including a plurality of departments. It follows, then, that Ludwig also fails to teach or suggest changing a display of a first group of a user's virtual single rooms of a first department into a display of a second group of the user's virtual single rooms of a second department in response to selecting the second department indicated in an organization chart. In other words, Ludwig is not capable of changing from a first group to a second group in the manner set forth in Applicants' claimed invention.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1, 3-5, 8-13, 16, 21, 23-25, 28-33, 36 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.

The secondary citations to Brunson and Palmer fail to compensate for the deficiencies in Ludwig. The patent to Brunson relates to a video messaging system, and is relied upon for a teaching of a universal mailbox to store messages. In Palmer, a video teleconferencing method and apparatus is provided, and this patent is relied upon for its teaching of a frame rate control.

Accordingly, without conceding the propriety of modifying Ludwig in view of either Brunson or Palmer, it is submitted that such combinations still fail to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention.

Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of Claims 6, 7, 14, 15, 17-20, 26, 27, 34, 35 and 37-40 are respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 1, 21 and 41 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims

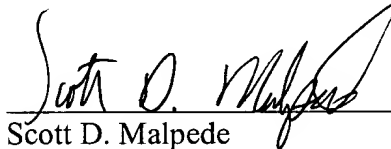
3-20 and 23-40 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Newly submitted dependent claims 42-44 are also submitted to be patentable over the cited art. Claims 42, 43, and 44 are dependent claims relating to Claims 1, 21, and 41, respectively, and set forth additional features of Applicants' invention.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott D. Malpede", is written over a horizontal line.

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